

Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Would Increasing Transparency Improve the Civil Justice System? By Kristin Leuschner. RAND. Apr. 2012. 3 p.

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_briefs/2012/RAND_RB9661.pdf

Increasingly, civil lawsuits are settled prior to going to trial. This increases the level of opacity in the justice system. This brief provides an overview of a new series of essays which find that increasing the transparency in the settlement process would: improve the functioning of the market in claims settlements; decrease fraud; reduce transaction costs; decrease public misperception; and increase public confidence in the civil justice system.

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

State and Local Government Workforce: 2012 Trends. Center for State & Local Government Excellence. Apr. 2012. 6 p.

http://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/S-L-Govt-Workforce-2012_12-195_web.pdf

A survey of public-sector managers in state and local government illustrates some of the concerns and priorities in 2012. “Top concerns of the survey participants are the public perception of government workers (73%), with staff retention, health care costs, and managing workload close behind (70%).”

ECONOMY

2012 California Green Innovation Index. By Doug Henton, et al. Next 10. Apr. 19, 2012. 72 p.

http://www.next10.org/sites/next10.huang.radicaldesigns.org/files/2012_GII%20Report_R6.pdf

“Clean technology investment and innovation are helping drive growth in California’s overall economy. Findings of the report include: California leads the nation in clean tech patent registrations, filing 910 between 2008-2010; from 2009 to 2010, energy generation from renewable sources in California increased 11.2% to represent 13.7% of all energy generated in the state; California’s wind generation capacity jumped by 44% from 2009 to 2010. For every dollar of GDP generated in 2009, California emitted 28% less carbon than in 1990; and, due to energy efficiency efforts, per capita electricity consumption in California remains close to 1990 levels.”

EDUCATION

Defunding Higher Education: What Are the Effects on College Enrollment? By Hans Johnson. Public Policy Institute of California. May 2012. 20 p.

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_512HJR.pdf

California has cut back on its spending on higher education significantly in the last ten years. Due to the increases in fees and the lower availability of classes, enrollment rates at UC and CSU have fallen by one-fifth over the past five years, from about 22% of all high school graduates to under 18%. The decline among the best-prepared graduates is even greater – from 67% to 55%.

Getting Down to Facts: Five Years Later. Policy Analysis for California Education. May 2012. 42 p.

http://www.stanford.edu/group/pace/PUBLICATIONS/PACE_Facts%20Brochure_Final.pdf

“This report commemorates the fifth anniversary of the Getting Down to Facts project, which sought to provide a thorough and reliable analysis of the critical challenges facing California’s education system as the necessary basis for an informed discussion of policy changes aimed at improving the performance of California schools and students. The report focuses on the four key issues that received emphasis in the Getting Down to Facts studies: governance, finance, personnel, and data systems.”

EMPLOYMENT

Short-Time Compensation as a Tool to Mitigate Job Loss? Evidence on the U.S. Experience During the Recent Recession. By Katherine G. Abraham, et al. W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. Mar. 2012. 30 p.

http://research.upjohn.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1198&context=up_workingpapers

Short-term Compensation (STC) programs that pro-rate unemployment benefits for workers whose hours are temporarily reduced might mitigate layoffs and alter the pattern of adjustment by encouraging job

sharing during times of economic downturn. California is among those states with an STC program. "During the recent economic crisis, manufacturing employers in STC states generally relied more on the adjustment of average hours and less on the adjustment of employment levels than did manufacturing employers in non-STC states." Rhode Island's high per-worker use of the program serves as an example of how greater STC use may help reduce U.S. unemployment in future recessions.

ENERGY

Public Support for Climate and Energy Policies in March 2012. By Anthony Leiserowitz, et al. George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication. Mar. 2012. 34 p.
<http://environment.yale.edu/climate/files/Policy-Support-March-2012.pdf>

"Overall, majorities of Americans say that global warming and clean energy should be among the nation's priorities, want more action by elected officials, corporations and citizens themselves, and support a variety of climate change and energy policies, including holding fossil fuel companies responsible for all the 'hidden costs' of their products. A majority also say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports a 'revenue neutral' tax shift from income taxes to fossil fuels, and that global warming will be one of the issues that determines their vote for President this fall."

HEALTH

Health Care Costs 101: California Addendum. By Katherine B. Wilson. California Health Care Foundation. May 2012. 33 p.
<http://www.chcf.org/publications/2012/05/health-care-costs-101>

"Health spending represents a significant share of California's economy, but the amount spent ranks among the lowest in the nation – both per person and per Medicaid enrollee. Since reaching its peak of 9.7% in 2003, the pace of growth in health spending has been decelerating. By 2009, toward the end of the recession, spending grew 4.5%, similar to the US rate of 4.6%, and the slowest pace since 1999." The report is based on the most recent data released by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

HUMAN SERVICES

California's Women Veterans, Response to the 2011 Survey: Preliminary Report. By Rebecca E. Blanton. California Research Bureau. May 2012. 12 p.
http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/12/FINAL_REPORT.pdf

California has the largest number (167,000) and greatest proportion (9.5%) of female veterans in the country. This preliminary report provides an overview of the needs identified by California's women veterans drawn from a new statewide survey conducted by the California Research Bureau. The 2011 survey contains the responses of nearly 900 women veterans. It focuses on their needs, service utilization patterns and experiences with various service providers, including the federal Department of Veterans Affairs and CalVet.

White Paper: Interagency Council on Veterans, February 22-23, 2012. By Rebecca E. Blanton and Tonya D. Lindsey. California Research Bureau. May 2012. 9 p.
<http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/12/WhitePaperICV.pdf>

Governor Jerry Brown established the Interagency Council on Veterans (ICV) to coordinate state-level activities that would improve services and outreach for veterans. Participants of the ICV met in February 2012 to discuss service needs, gaps and obstacles in service, and to outline potential next steps for improving services to veterans. This paper analyzes the contents of the meeting discussions and

presents key findings from that analysis. Participants in the ICV identified the need for funding, increasing data sharing and data capture, improving transition programs and increasing public outreach as critical needs for the veteran community.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

LegalTrac is useful for finding articles in more than 1,500 major law reviews, law journals, and legal newspapers. Subjects include federal and state cases, laws, and government regulations; taxation; international law; and more. Full text is available for over 250 titles. State employees may access LegalTrac at <http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/sacr92935> using desktop IP recognition or a California State Library card. Walk-in visitors may use LegalTrac at workstations in Room 100 of the California State Library at 900 N Street, Sacramento.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Gaining Public Support for Freeway Congestion Pricing. By Robert W. Poole, Jr. Reason Foundation. Apr. 2012. 25 p.

http://reason.org/files/road_congestion_pricing_politics.pdf

“Conventional approaches toward implementing congestion pricing on U.S. freeways ... are likely to create more losers than winners.” Rather than imposing a single price for all freeway users, this paper proposes “separately priced lanes for premium-service motorists, regular motorists and heavy trucks” and an “evolutionary approach to implementing such a system, in which each step can be justified on its own merits, and each creates preconditions for later moving on to the next step.”

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